Spring 2019 Course Descriptions

Instructor: Noah Peterson
Course: 310
Title: History of the English Language

Description: Phonological, grammatical and lexical history of the English language; brief discussion of some other Indo-European languages; principles of linguistic change, as reflected in English. This course provides a historical study of the English language, beginning with a discussion of its Indo-European origins and continuing on to the present day. Students will gain knowledge concerning phonological, grammatical, and lexical changes within the language over time, and will examine the social and political conditions related to such changes. The course will focus on the English language in its social context and will ask students to think about language as a dynamic system that changes when it comes into contact with other cultures through migration, war, colonialization, and technological advancements. Students will explore such changes through various literary works in Old, Middle, and Modern English, including passages from Beowulf, Malory, Chaucer, and Shakespeare. Class activities will involve lecture, discussion, and group work.

Proposed Readings: Baugh and Cable, History of the English Language; Bauer and Trudgil, Language Myths